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Dear Lucy:

The presidency of the Florida Gulf Coast University offers a compelling opportunity that, I believe, fits well with my strengths. I work deliberately to gauge needs and develop strategies for improvement, and then I work quickly to implement those strategies so the benefits are apparent to all. I have experience leading higher education institutions to success in each of the four keys pillars described in FGCU's strategic plan. In this letter, I'll describe examples that have improved student success, academic excellence, entrepreneurship, business and community relationships, developing clinically oriented health professions, research prominence, and fundraising – while managing relentless budget pressures.

My career has developed at two AAU land-grant universities with major health science centers. Most recently I have led the University of New Mexico (UNM), a large research-intensive university with a health science.

During my tenure as a professor, dean, provost and senior vice president for Academic Affairs, and now as president, I have learned a great deal. No lesson has been more consistent than the respect and admiration I have gained for my colleagues. I am proud of the leadership team that works with me daily, and I am equally proud of every individual who contributes to the enormous value our institutions provide for the citizens of our states, nation, and world.

Leading any university in the rapidly changing environment of American higher education is a daunting task. The complexity of the Florida Gulf Coast University increases that challenge; however, with my leadership style, ideas, perspectives, experience and aptitudes, I believe I can significantly help improve the success of the Florida Gulf Coast University in

carrying out its mission. I understand how to accomplish the duties of the President, including enhancing the quality and affordability of academic programs, building and maintaining productive partnerships with state and federal government, growing state and private philanthropic support for the University, and advancing the institution's progress and recognition as a leading American university – while building and maintaining strong relationships with the Board of Trustees.

My leadership is focused on collaborative partnerships, driven by a clear and public strategic plan. The following sections describe examples of accomplishments that have resulted from these partnerships and plans.

### **Academic Vision and Leadership**

- Over the last decade, universities have increasingly partnered with local leaders to use the economic power of the university to drive innovation and job growth in the community. At UNM, I provided the impetus and then stewarded the development of *Innovate ABQ*, a research district designed to leverage university intellectual property into successful businesses that grow the state's economy. In particular, the emphasis has been on the development of “knowledge jobs,” woven from inventions at the university that require the creation of roles deriving from here-to-fore unknown processes. Each knowledge job yields five traditional jobs in the community, making the growth of knowledge start-ups extremely beneficial to ambitious districts and their home communities. In my first years at UNM, I partnered with the mayor, business leaders, and county commission to raise \$7.5 million to purchase the land and buildings for *Innovate ABQ*. We have since formed a separate 501-C3 composed of entrepreneurs and University leaders to develop *Innovate ABQ* into a thriving innovation district. We have commitments from the Air Force Research Lab and Sandia National Labs to participate along with interest from a host of fledging entrepreneurs.
- We have enhanced our presence at *Innovate ABQ* with the creation of the *Innovation Academy*. The *Innovation Academy* is an interdisciplinary program that cuts across the entire university to offer students in every major the opportunity to learn about entrepreneurship and creativity. The program has been an extraordinary success with more than 400 students participating in the first 15 months. Our faculty has embraced the concept of the Academy, with 171 faculty members offering classes in the curriculum. Already, two student-created businesses have

attracted venture investments.

- I am an experienced leader able to catalyze and guide change. For example at Kent State, I led a significant revision of the promotion and tenure process and the evaluation of every unit's handbook. At the University of Florida (UF) and then again at Kent State, I led the creation of Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredited colleges of Public Health. Now, the College of Public Health and Health Professions at UF is ranked among the university's top research generating colleges, and the on-line MPH at Kent State is ranked among the top in the United States. At UNM, we recently created a new college of Population Health, which is tailored to serve the state's needs in public health and population issues in health care.
- At UNM in 2013, after discussions with state and business leaders, we decided to modify the curriculum of our College of Education to increase the emphasis on practitioner training. In a diverse state like New Mexico, our least experienced teachers are often assigned to the most challenging classrooms, filled with children presenting not only educational issues, but also complex social problems. To address this challenge, we have improved our students' and new graduates' learning by pairing them with "master" teachers who provide longterm, advanced mentoring.
- I have always enjoyed development work, and development has become more important as state and tuition revenues have slowed. At UF, one of our donors made a contribution to the college endowing the deanship in my name. When I arrived at UNM, our foundation was not adequately funded, so we established metrics for each dean and created a culture of philanthropy for the campus that helped stabilize support. I have focused on an array of approaches to development from traditional donor solicitation to partnerships with industry. At UF, we received \$5 million for the Brooks Rehabilitation Studies from Brooks Rehabilitation, a large rehab hospital in Jacksonville. We also partnered with Compass Knowledge group to form a company that eventually brought \$12 million to the University. At UNM, we have also focused on corporate partnerships. For example, we worked with Fortinet, a cybersecurity company, to create a gift to the College of Education. We also received \$3 million from Nusenda, a local credit union, to help fund Innovate ABQ. Since becoming president, I have solicited more than \$100 million in requests to donors. Our endowment has increased by more 30% in value and I personally

managed the top 30 university prospects. We have enjoyed record-breaking fundraising during my presidency.

- Athletics has a critical role in American universities. A successful athletics program should focus on the concept of a student-athlete. Few presidents have my background in this area. As an undergraduate, I was fortunate to be the recipient of a swimming scholarship and to have many talented teammates. We placed 10th in national championships, and I was selected as a member of the All-American team during my senior year. As a faculty member, I served on the University of Missouri's athletic committee. I currently serve as the Mountain West Conference's representative to the NCAA Division I President's Forum. Finally, I have experienced intercollegiate athletics as a father – both my sons have played on college teams.

### **Student Success Initiatives**

- Shortly after I arrived at UNM, we established an Honors College that now is fully subscribed with more than 600 students enrolled. It was recently ranked among the top 25 in the United States.
- Support needs for at-risk students vary from campus to campus. At Kent State, we focused on first generation students, particularly commuters who needed enhanced social integration. At UNM, we developed a suite of summer programs to integrate at-risk students into the university.
- While provost at Kent State, I oversaw the development of a Math Emporium to enhance math skills for students not prepared for college math. With this program, we saw a 54% increase in passing grades for students in entry-level math.
- At The University of New Mexico, we created the Math Learning Lab (MaLL) and saw similar improvements. Our English faculty was inspired to create a similar program that led to huge improvements in writings skills for incoming students while allowing them to progress in their required core courses.
- At Kent State, enrollment grew by 23% during my tenure while we improved the quality of our incoming class and improved retention by more than 3%. At UNM, the quality of our incoming class has also improved during my tenure. Freshman to sophomore retention has improved 6%. Our 4-year graduation rate improved 4%.

- At Kent State, international enrollment increased by 1800 students during my tenure as provost. We established centers in Beijing, Geneva, Chengdu and Delhi. At UNM, we have increased the number of international students by 1200 during my tenure and established centers in Beijing and Mexico City.
- At UNM we created online degree plans that model the path to more than 200 undergraduate degrees. Building on that success, we established the Institute for Design and Innovation (IDI) to serve the state's needs for technology, policy, analytics and data science relevant to education.

### **Research and Economic Development**

- I have successfully built interdisciplinary and extramurally funded research programs. During my tenure as dean at the College of Public Health and Health Professions at UF, research funding **increased** from \$1.6 million to \$17 million.
- At UNM, research funding has been more than \$300 million per year while it has diminished in most universities. We have increased research funding despite recent cutbacks in federal funding.
- Through STC.UNM – the university's highly successful technology transfer and economic development organization – UNM research resulted in almost 100 invention disclosures, 27 issued patents, and 39 start-up companies during my first four years as president.
- At UNM, we established closer engagement with nearby national labs that gives us a distinct strategic advantage. Shortly after arriving at UNM, Senator Jeff Bingaman (for whom I worked in the U.S. Senate for 4 years) suggested we look to Oak Ridge National Lab for ideas for UNM. We took a group to Oak Ridge and learned how the University of Tennessee had improved its science and national position by partnering with Battelle to manage Oak Ridge. Since then, we have positioned UNM to bid for the management of Sandia National Labs. The competition for the management of Sandia opened this year and we are partnering with Battelle, Boeing, the University of Texas and Texas A&M systems to compete to operate the largest national lab in the United States.

### **Management**

- During our 12 years at UF, my wife and I recognized the importance of bringing together the university community in social settings. As a dean, provost, and now as a president, Janet and I have enjoyed opening our home to the campus community. It had been many years since a president actually lived in the president's home on campus at UNM. We were thrilled to move into University House and routinely hold many events for faculty, students and the community.
- Early in my term at UNM, I recognized that our campus was not responding adequately to complaints of sexual assault and harassment. We immediately took steps to improve how we handled complaints and reports. We established an interdisciplinary team to coordinate responses and break down silos that were preventing effective management. An incident in 2014, involving two of our athletes, drew extensive attention. Though the case was not prosecuted, we recognized more systemic issues it revealed. We brought in a nationally recognized group to examine our policies and to provide an arms-length assessment of issues on campus. The findings indicated no systemic bias, but did determine that our policies were confusing, making it difficult for a victim to seek help.
- Shortly after our commissioned report, the Department of Justice (DOJ) initiated a review of UNM's policies on sexual harassment and assault. The DOJ investigation gave us an opportunity to gain expert consultation, and we swiftly made significant changes in our policies. We were able to quickly reach an agreement with DOJ, who noted our hard work to improve our culture and policies. While more work is needed in this critical area, a recent campus survey showed that UNM has made huge progress toward improving our students' feeling of safety and their confidence that we are responsive to this issue.
- At UNM, we implemented a new accounting system to allow transparent fiscal reporting throughout the institution. We then implemented a form of responsibility-centered management (RCM) that allowed tuition dollars to follow student credit hours. This "tuition sharing" created an incentive for colleges to improve enrollment. Through the formation of a Budget Leadership Team that includes student, staff and faculty representatives, plus constant dialog within the university and with state and local leaders, we have proactively weathered successive budget reductions while maintaining low tuition. Prior to UNM, I also oversaw the implementation of RCM for the eight-campus system at Kent State.

- I have faculty experience and appreciate, understand, and value academia along with its culture and customs. When I was at Kent State, there was a significant rift between the administration and the faculty. I am proud that we were able to address this during my tenure and achieve significant improvements. For example, confidence in senior leadership increased 45%.
- When I arrived at UNM, relations with the African American community were poor. Their leaders community felt ignored and distrusted the university. I began meeting with this group routinely and vastly improved trust and confidence. While not all the problems are resolved, we now have a personal relationship that allows us to work through issues when they arise. I use direct, personal contact to increase mutual understanding with many constituents, including student groups.

In summary, I am passionate about the importance of American universities for both our citizens and our economy. Despite my passion, I have perspective about how others view my aspirations and the ability to laugh at my own mistakes. I believe I am well prepared for this role.

Throughout my administrative career - as a dean, provost and president - I have been able improve enrollment, create innovative programs that increase student demand and serve the community, and grow federal and private funding. I have enjoyed my time at The University of New Mexico, and I am ready to join with new colleagues, experience new challenges, and build on what I have learned to date.

Thank you in advance for considering my application. I look forward to learning more about the search process.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert G. Frank". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline.

Robert G. Frank

